

Bugs, Proprietary Stuff, and DRM

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[A lazy fix 20 years ago means the Y2K bug is taking down computers now](#) [2]

Parking meters, cash registers and a professional wrestling video game have fallen foul of a computer glitch related to the Y2K bug.

The Y2020 bug, which has taken many payment and computer systems offline, is a long-lingering side effect of attempts to fix the Y2K, or millennium bug.

Both stem from the way computers store dates. Many older systems express years using two numbers ? 98, for instance, for 1998 ? in an effort to save memory. The Y2K bug was a fear that computers would treat 00 as 1900, rather than 2000.

Programmers wanting to avoid the Y2K bug had two broad options: entirely rewrite their code, or adopt a quick fix called ?windowing?, which would treat all dates from 00 to 20, as from the 2000s, rather than the 1900s. An estimated 80 per cent of computers fixed in 1999 used the quicker, cheaper option.

?Windowing, even during Y2K, was the worst of all possible solutions because it kicked the problem down the road,? says Dylan Mulvin at the London School of Economics.



[Getting Better, Finally: Intuit's Shady Actions For Free File Program Lead To Change In IRS Deal](#) [3]

Going through the history of our posts on Intuit and TurboTax will give you an incredibly frustrating recent history of Intuit's bullshit actions regarding its free tax filing program for low-income households. This all stems from a deal the IRS cut with several major tax preparation companies, which amounted essentially to the IRS promising not to offer its own free file program so long as these companies, Intuit being the largest, provided free tax filing

programs to the public themselves. The outcome of this naive deal cut by the IRS was to have companies like Intuit do everything possible to hide its free file sites from the public internet by delisting it from searches, then lying to customers to avoid refunding money when they complained that they could have filed for free, and finally Intuit similarly fooling veterans into paying for services that would otherwise be free all while wrapping itself in the American flag.

- [Apple Is Bullying a Security Company with a Dangerous DMCA Lawsuit \[4\]](#)

Apple has unleashed their legal juggernaut on an innovative iOS security company, and if they win their lawsuit, the damage will reverberate beyond the security community and into the world of repair and maintenance.

Corellium's software creates virtual iPhones in a web browser, so that app developers and security researchers can tinker without needing a physical device. It's nerdy stuff that most people will never need, but it's genuinely useful. So useful, in fact, that Apple tried to buy the company. When the founders refused, Apple decided to sue them into oblivion.

- [Formlabs Form 3 Teardown \[5\]](#)

It's been my privilege to do teardowns on both the Formlabs Form 1 and Form 2. With the recent release of the Form 3, I was asked by Formlabs if I wanted to do another teardown, and of course I jumped on the opportunity. I always learn an immense amount while taking apart their machines, and it's also been very satisfying to watch their engineering team grow and mature over the years.

[...]

Well, that's it for the Form 3 teardown ? from the exterior shell down to the lone galvanometer. I've had the privilege of court-side seats to observe the growth of Formlabs. There's a saying along the lines of "the last 20% takes 80% of the effort". Based on what I've seen of the Form series, that should be amended to "the last 20% takes 80% of the effort ? and then you get to start on the product you meant to make in the first place?". It dovetails nicely into the observation that products don't hit their stride until the third version (remember Windows 3.x?). From three grad students fresh out of the MIT Media Lab to a billion-dollar company, Formlabs and the Form series of printers have come a long way. I'd count myself as one of the bigger skeptics of 3D printing as a mass-production technology, but I hadn't considered an approach like the LPU. I feel like the LPU embodies an audacious vision of the future of 3D printing that was not obvious to me as an observer about nine years ago. I'm excited to see where this all goes from here!

Links:

[1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/38>

[2] <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2229238-a-lazy-fix-20-years-ago-means-the-y2k-bug-is-taking-down-computers-now/>

[3] <https://www.techdirt.com/articles/20200102/09434943664/getting-better-finally-intuits-shady-actions-free-file-program-lead-to-change-irs-deal.shtml>

[4] <https://www.ifixit.com/News/apple-is-bullying-a-security-company-with-a-dangerous-dmca-lawsuit>

[5] <https://www.bunniestudios.com/blog/?p=5701>